



Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference IX

Saturday, January 30th to Sunday, January 31st, 2021

Boston University Academy

Boston, MA

***French Revolution of 1812 and the
French Invasion of Russia***

***Historical Joint Crisis Committee:
France***

Background Guide

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Committee Staff

Surya Sakhamuri, chair

Audrey Xiao, vice-chair

Sudarshan Ramanan, Secretary-General

John Lee, Secretary-General

Jonas Rajagopal, Secretary-General



Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to BUAMUN IX and to this joint-crisis committee! My name is Surya Sakhamuri, and it is my honor and delight to be your Crisis Chair. I am a junior from BU Academy and this is my third year of involvement with BUAMUN. I have been doing Model UN since 7th grade and have even participated in this conference as a middle schooler; hence, I'm looking forward to working with you all to make this conference an interesting and unforgettable experience. Your Vice-Chair, Audrey Xiao, and I can't wait to see what kinds of crisis arcs and debates you manage to create. With all of that said: I encourage you to read this guide thoroughly to determine what kinds of valuable information you can find to craft your own solutions (and problems!) in the coming weeks.

Because this is a historical joint-crisis committee, delegates will not only be interacting with other delegates within the same committee, but also with other delegates from the other committee – HJCC: French Revolution of 1812 and the French Invasion of Russia: Russia. Because there are two committees, the flow of debate will depend not only on your interaction among each other, but also with the second committee. As with most crises, we will suspend parliamentary procedure, be in a constant moderated caucus, and pass directives.

Welcome Letter

For those of you who have never done a crisis before (or done Model UN before) fear not; we will go over all of this in detail and in non-MUN rhetoric at the beginning of our first committee session.

In terms of papers, I do expect you each to write a position paper (and you must write one if you want to be eligible for an award). Also, although I've supplied some basic knowledge on the subject matter, I do expect you guys to do additional research. I've listed below some useful resources to use, but the chair would look favorably upon those who do additional research.

I know this is a lot of information and may be a bit confusing, so please feel free to email me if you have any questions about the committee and how it will run, any content in the background guide, or if you need help with research or writing your policy papers. There are a few positions that are hard to research, so please use me as a resource if you can't find much information.

I am so excited and passionate about this conference and cannot wait to see you guys!

Happy researching!

Surya Sakhamuri

Audrey Xiao

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Position Paper Information

This committee will require a formal position paper. The chair will review position papers, and well-written/well-researched papers can influence award determinations for this committee. Position papers are 1-2 pages in length, font 12, Times New Roman, double-spaced, and should follow a 3-paragraph scheme: 1) Introduction to the topic, 2) delegate's stance on the topic, and 3) delegate's proposed action on topic. Please remember that what you write in your papers should not reflect that you as a student believe in, but what your character/role in the committee thinks. Position papers should follow the following conventions on headers:

Delegate: Surya Sakhamuri

School: Boston University Academy

Committee: French Revolution - France

Position: Marshal Louis-Alexandre Berthier (Chief of Staff), HJCC:
France Chairman

Topic:

If you have any questions regarding your position paper or any information included in the background guide, please contact your chair through email.

Committee Structure

The other thing to keep in mind is the fact that this is a historical committee. Our conference will begin on June 24, 1812: the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte crosses the Neman River and leads the Grande Armee into Russia. That means that everything you've read in your history books before this date applies, but nothing after. When you enter the committee room, you should disband all knowledge you have of what has happened after that date. Our committee will not necessarily follow historical events. You guys have a chance to change history in this committee, and your actions may yield a different result than what actually happened.



Topic Background

French Revolution of 1812

When Revolutionary France declared war on the Austrian empire in the spring of 1792, its leaders promised a short, sweet and victorious campaign. Instead, 1792 marked the beginning of a long, grinding, hideously bloody series of wars that would drag on in every state in Europe and last, with scant interruption.

Long before 1792, the major European powers had fought with each other at regular intervals, but those conflicts were remarkably limited in scope. The armies tended to avoid large-scale battle. Noncombatants could hope for relatively merciful treatment. Enemy officers dealt with each other as honorable adversaries. The major powers and their armed forces were still dominated by hereditary aristocracies, and war retained the feel of an aristocratic ritual. It was not play-acting by any means, but earlier wars proceeded according to a fairly strict code of aristocratic honor.

The French Revolution marked a sudden and dramatic break with this tradition. Revolutionary France overthrew the country's aristocracy along with its king and queen, and brought in new men (including the young Napoleon Bonaparte) to lead its armed forces. By 1793, its leaders were calling for total military mobilization of the population. Not only would young men go into the army, but women, old men and even children would turn their energies to the war effort, producing weapons, uniforms and supplies. France declared that its opponents were not honorable adversaries but enemies of the human race who amounted to nothing more than criminals.

Topic Background

French Revolution of 1812

The result was a steady escalation of horror that did not stop even after the high point of revolutionary radicalism had passed in France itself, and after Napoleon took power there in 1799. The figures speak for themselves: More than one-fifth of all the major battles fought in Europe between 1490 and 1815 took place in the 25 years after 1790. Before 1790 only a handful of battles had involved more than 100,000 combatants; in the 1809 Battle of Wagram, largest in the gunpowder age to date, involved 300,000. Just four years later the Battle of Leipzig drew 500,000, with fully 150,000 of them killed or wounded. During the wars, France alone counted close to a million war deaths. In the process, France carved out for itself the greatest empire seen in Europe since the days of the Caesars, but lost it again in a stunningly short time.

Among the most hideous novelties of the period was the spread of vicious insurgent campaigns against French occupying forces that the French themselves tried to murderously suppress. The first such campaigns took place in France itself, involving struggles by traditional Catholics and Royalists against the Revolutionary government. But as French rule spread like an inkblot over the map of Europe, more such episodes followed: in Belgium, in Italy, in the Tyrolian Alps of Austria.

Topic Background

French Revolution of 1812

The worst of all occurred in Spain, where the War of Independence set a new standard of horror in European warfare, and bequeathed a new word to European languages: guerrilla, from the Spanish for little war. It was in Spain that the French army's brutal campaign to suppress those guerrilla wars revealed fully the ugly face of the new total war.

During much of the early Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, Spain was allied with France. But as the years went by and Napoleon claimed the title of emperor, he contemplated overthrowing Spain's Bourbon dynasty, which he blamed for the disaster in 1805 at the Battle of Trafalgar, where the combined French and Spanish fleets were decimated by the British under Lord Nelson. Soon, France was engaged in the Napoleonic Wars, a series of major conflicts with various coalitions of European nations. In October 1805, the British wiped out Napoleon's fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar. However, in December of that same year, Napoleon achieved what is considered to be one of his greatest victories at the Battle of Austerlitz, in which his army defeated the Austrians and Russians. The victory resulted in the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine.



Topic Background

French Revolution of 1812

In 1806 Napoleon decided to punish the British with an embargo that became known as the Continental System. But by the end of 1810, Czar Alexander I had stopped complying due to its deleterious effect on Russian trade and the value of the ruble. Alexander also imposed a heavy tax on French luxury products like lace and rebuffed Napoleon's attempt to marry one of his sisters. Exacerbating tensions was the 1807 formation of the Duchy of Warsaw. Though Napoleon created that state from Prussian, not Russian, lands, Alexander worried that it would incite a hostile Polish nationalism.

Although the French Empire seemed to be at its peak in 1810 and 1811, it had in fact already declined somewhat from its apogee in 1806–1809. Although most of Western and Central Europe lay under his control—either directly or indirectly through various protectorates, allies, and countries defeated by his empire and under treaties favorable for France—Napoleon had embroiled his armies in the costly and drawn-out Peninsular War in Spain and Portugal. France's economy, army morale, and political support at home had also declined. But most importantly, Napoleon himself was not in the same physical and mental state as in years past. He had become overweight and increasingly prone to various maladies. Nevertheless, despite his troubles in Spain, with the exception of British expeditionary forces to that country, no European power dared to oppose him.

Topic Background

French Revolution of 1812

The Treaty of Schönbrunn, which ended the 1809 war between Austria and France, had a clause removing Western Galicia from Austria and annexing it to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Russia viewed this as against its interests and as a potential launching point for an invasion of Russia. In 1811, the Russian general staff developed a plan for an offensive war, assuming a Russian assault on Warsaw and on Danzig.

In an attempt to gain increased support from Polish nationalists and patriots, Napoleon in his own words termed this war the Second Polish War. Napoleon coined the War of the Fourth Coalition as the "first" Polish war because one of the official declared goals of this war was the resurrection of the Polish state on territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1810, Russia withdrew from the Continental System. Czar Alexander I found Russia in an economic bind as his country had little in the way of manufacturing, yet was rich in raw materials and relied heavily on trade with Napoleon's continental system for both money and manufactured goods. Russia's withdrawal from the system was a further incentive to Napoleon to force a decision.

Topic Background

French Invasion of Russia

Now, on June 24, 1812, Napoleon's Grande Armée crosses the Neman River in an attempt to engage and defeat the Russian Army. Napoleon hopes to compel the Emperor of All Russia, Alexander I, to cease trading with British merchants through proxies in an effort to pressure the United Kingdom to sue for peace. The Grande Armée is numbered around 685,000 soldiers (including 400,000 soldiers from France). It is the largest, the most truly epic, army ever known to have been assembled in the history of European warfare up to this point. The enemy, the filthy Russians, have approximately 200,000 soldiers. Our goal? To win a quick victory that forces Alexander to the negotiating table.

Yet, the Russian army refuses to engage with Napoleon's Grande Armée; they simply retreat into the Russian interior! The Grande Armée does not have the supplies or the distribution networks required for such a long march. We thought the Grande Armée would be supplied by wagons or would be able to gather supplies as they went. However, to our dismay, Russian roads are in very poor condition, making it very difficult to transport supplies. The Grande Armée also failed to prepare for Russia's harsh winter. Our troops are not dressed or trained for the kind of weather they will soon face. It is up to you now, with your power and authority given, to ensure our swift victory that will impress not only Napoleon, but the world!



Prominent Figures

France

I. Louis-Nicolas Davout

Louis-Nicolas Davout is a French military commander as well as a Marshal of the Empire. As a Frenchman, his top priority is to support Napoleon and bring France a victory against Russia. When Napoleon was named emperor in 1804, Davout was ranked one of the 18 Marshals of the Empire. Because he is the youngest and least experienced of the generals promoted to marshal, other members of the Marshals of the Empire show a somewhat hostility towards him, hence asking for aid from other Marshals may result in some complications. Davout is entrusted by Napoleon with the task of organizing the "corps of observation of the Elbe", which would become the gigantic army with which Napoleon invades Russia. In this, he has the command of the I Corps, numbering over 70,000 soldiers that may have wavering trust over him.

Prominent Figures

France

II. François Joseph Lefebvre

François Joseph Lefebvre is another French military commander as well as a Marshal of the Empire. While he does show loyalty and fights for France, his defeat from Tyrolean patriot Andreas Hofer has left a wound on his pride. Hence, his main goal is to prove his worth as a military commander, and do whatever it takes to stand out and shine above the rest of them generals in the French army. Lefebvre has control over the Old Guard, a group of elite veteran soldiers that have an undying loyalty for Lefebvre. They are of the highest class of soldiers, and are most likely to execute any plan you command to them. However, a loss of such soldiers may also become a huge loss of your authority and power.

III. Karl Philipp, Fürst zu Schwarzenberg

Karl Philipp, Fürst zu Schwarzenberg is an Austrian field marshal who has served in the French campaign from the early years of the Revolution. In 1806–1809 Schwarzenberg served as the Austrian ambassador to Russia, but soon cut his ties with them after the signing of the Treaty of Schönbrunn. Napoleon holds Schwarzenberg to high esteem, giving him full command of the Austrian auxiliary troops. While Schwarzenberg fights for France, he is still loyal to Austria, and will act only towards the benefit of his country.

Prominent Figures

France

IV. Józef Poniatowski

Józef Poniatowski is a Polish leader, general, minister of war and army chief, who became a Marshal of the French Empire. A staunch ally and supporter of Napoleon I, Poniatowski voluntarily decided to take part in the French invasion of Russia. Poniatowski is the commander of V Corps, nearly a 100,000 strong Polish force that was the greatest Polish military effort ever seen before. Although not formed yet, the Polish general also has plans of forming a Polish Armed Forces, but has yet to decide his specific plans in doing so. Similar to Schwarzenberg, he puts priority for his country while also supporting France. He wishes to first take back formerly Polish-owned areas in a route that may seem more advantageous to the French, yet Napoleon does not seem to consider his ideas until Poniatowski will create a much more compelling reason.

V. Eugène de Beauharnais

Eugène de Beauharnais is the stepson and adopted child of Napoleon. He commands the Army of Italy (IV Corps). Although he is not the heir to the imperial throne, this does not stop his pursuit to make his stepfather proud and show that he's worthy of much more responsibilities. Second to the Chief of Staff, Beauharnais is the closest general to Napoleon in this committee. Hence, Napoleon will hear what he has to say and take into consideration any ideas he proposes.

Prominent Figures

France

VI. Joachim Murat

Joachim Murat is a Marshal of the Empire, who is also known as "First Horseman of Europe". He was made Prince of the Empire and Admiral of the Empire in 1805, despite having very little knowledge about naval warfare. Murat has a little feud with Joseph Bonparte, brother of Napoleon, as Joseph had taken a large fraction of his troops. Yet, Murat still leads the most powerful cavalry in the Grand Armée. Being the commander of such an esteemed army distinguishes him from the rest, and his title is known throughout the army. Murat's valour and daring cavalry charges later earned him the rank of general in previous campaigns, leading him to be good friends, and a good leader, with Napoleon.

VII. Marshal Louis-Alexandre Berthier (HJCC chairman)

As the HJCC chairman, Berthier wishes for the best of France. He has the closest relationship to Napoleon and can contact him directly if the committee chooses. Similarly, Berthier may contact the rest of the 18 Marshals who are not present in the committee to communicate their input in certain debates and issues. As a Chief of Staff, he has vast knowledge of the armies and can provide any information on logistics and authorities committee members have.

Prominent Figures

France

VIII. Johann Yorck

Johann Yorck is a Prussian general who sides with the French army. In the reorganization of the Prussian army which followed the 1807 Treaty of Tilsit, Yorck was one of the leading figures. At first major-general commanding the West Prussian brigade, afterwards inspector-general of light infantry, he was finally appointed second in command to General Grawert, the leader of the auxiliary corps which Prussia was compelled to send in support of Napoleon's invasion of Russia. The two generals did not agree, Grawert being an open partisan of the French alliance, and Yorck an ardent patriot. In essence, Yorck wishes to be on the winning side of the war, no matter what.

IX. Julius von Grawert

Julius von Grawert commanded the Prussian auxiliary corps attached to French Emperor Napoleon I's Grande Armée during the French invasion of Russia. Grawert managed to win the respect of the French generals and of Napoleon himself, who requested him as commander of the Prussian Auxiliary Corps which, as part of Jacques MacDonald's X Corps. Yorck wishes to take his position as he believes he can do better than Grawert. Interestingly, there is a widespread rumor that Grawert is sharply opposed to the French, though nothing is confirmed.

Prominent Figures

France

X. Napoleon Bonaparte

Everyone knows his name. Some thought of him as a myth, others know him as a legend. No matter, Napoleon is a great general of skillful strategy. However, this means that he will not listen to just any plan or advice. He takes every suggestion seriously and if he does not approve, he won't allow it to happen. If he feels there are any signs of rebellion to his reign, he will not hesitate to quell the issue immediately. Since he has a very busy schedule, he is not present in the committee, but any messages that are sent to him must be filtered through his chief of staff first.

XI. Claude Victor-Perrin

Claude Victor-Perrin was a French soldier and military commander who served during both the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. He was made a Marshal of the Empire in 1807 by Napoleon. On the outbreak of hostilities with Prussia he joined the V Army Corps. At first his corps was posted in the east Prussia but it was later moved up to Smolensk support the invading forces. His most important priority is staying on the defense and protecting the backlines of the invasion across the river.



Prominent Figures

France

XII. Michel Ney

Marshal Ney is French military commander and Marshal of the Empire who fought in the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. Ney took command of the VI Corps of the Grande Armée and even saved Napoleon from defeat at Eylau, although the battle ended in a draw. However, he was removed from his command for insubordination. Now, Ney is given command of the III Corps of the Grande Armée during the invasion of Russia in 1812. With his great repertoire, many trust Ney in his unconventional but brave and effective strategies. It's clear that Napoleon sees something inside Ney, and looks favorable in his strong, risky plans instead of playing it safe.

Prominent Figures

France

XIII. Charles Pierre François Augereau

Augereau, the 1st Duke of Castiglione, is a French military commander and a Marshal of the Empire who served during the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. After serving in the Revolutionary Wars, he earned rapid promotion while fighting against Spain and soon found himself as a division commander under Napoleon Bonaparte in Italy. He fought in all of Bonaparte's battles of 1796 with great distinction. During the Napoleonic Wars, Napoleon entrusted Augereau with important commands. Due to his job of aiding Napoleon directly, he is in close contact with the French emperor and will (and must) listen to his every command. If Augereau hears of any slander or opposition to Napoleon, he will not hesitate to retaliate at such fools.

XIV. Jacques MacDonald

Étienne Jacques Joseph Alexandre MacDonald, 1st Duke of Taranto, is a Marshal of the Empire and military leader during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon made him military adviser to Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, He commanded the left wing of the Grande Armée for the invasion of Russia. It is clear that his military prowess and dominance will be of utmost importance to this invasion.

Prominent Figures

France

XV. Jean-Baptiste Bessières

Also the 1st Duke of Istria, Bessières is a French military commander and Marshal of the Empire who served during both the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. His younger brother, Bertrand, followed in his footsteps and eventually became a divisional general. For the Russian campaign of 1812, Bessières commands the enlarged Guard Cavalry. Yet, he is known for his passivity, which does not give him such a great name among the army. Nevertheless, his strategy is to be calm and clever, something most other commanders never think of.

XVI. Géraud-Pierre-Henri-Julie

Cousin of Bessières, Henri Géraud Julien is a scientist, diplomat, and imperial official of the French army. He is constantly concocting and discovering new technology, such as guns and armor, that may aid the army in its invasion. While he does not actively engage in the fight, Julien is an influencer that can sway and reach out to the people of France for any support necessary.



Prominent Figures

France

XVII. Bertrand Bessières

Bertrand Bessières, 1st Baron Bessières is a French general of the Napoleonic Wars. He was the younger brother of Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bessières. After serving with a good record in Italy, in Egypt and at Hohenlinden, Bertrand Bessières has a considerable command in the Grande Armée. His philosophy is simple: no man left behind. Although quite an admirable trait, his care for every man on his side may be one of his downfalls. He will disagree with any plan that will sacrifice the lives of soldiers.

XVIII. Guillaume Philibert Duhesme

Guillaume Philibert, 1st Count Duhesme, is a French general during the Napoleonic Wars. He's known for his brutal, savage fighting habits. He will completely destroy any enemy to the point where even his own allies feel a bit of hate towards him. Due to this, he is not given much power at the beginning of this invasion. However, he is able to sway soldiers to join his side, and will have many cunning plots in order to regain the power and authority that was once his.



Prominent Figures

France

XIX. Jean Reynier

Jean Louis Ebénézer Reynier rose in rank to become a French army general officer during the French Revolutionary Wars. He leads a division under Napoleon Bonaparte in the French Campaign in Egypt and Syria. During the Napoleonic Wars he continues to hold important combat commands, eventually leading an army corps (VII Corps) that is consisted of Saxons. Unlike other commanders, he shows sympathy for the lower soldiers, especially those not from France. Due to this, almost all non-French soldiers are loyal to him.

XX. Victor de Fay de La Tour-Maubourg

Marie-Victor-Nicolas de Faÿ, marquis de La Tour-Maubourg, is a French cavalry military commander. Leading the IV Corps, he is extremely loyal to Napoleon, and will do whatever he wishes. As a nobleman, however, he looks down on those that are not nobles, and will not care about the lives of those lower than him.

XXI. Jean-Andoche Junot

Jean-Andoche Junot, 1st Duke of Abrantès, is a French general during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. He is a very erratic general, who rarely has a plan when attacking. This however, is one of his strengths, as he is willing to listen to any other plan to the 'T'.

Prominent Figures

France

XXII. Jérôme Bonaparte

Jérôme-Napoléon Bonaparte is the youngest brother of Napoleon I and reigned as Jerome Napoleon I (formally Hieronymus Napoleon in German), King of Westphalia, between 1807 and 1813. His financial, military, and administrative successes shows he is a loyal, useful, and soldierly asset (leader of right flank) to Napoleon. Perhaps, he may be one of the very few that can change Napoleon's mind when needed. He is willing to listen to others, and will talk with his brothers if asked.

XXIII. Laurent de Gouvion Saint-Cyr

Laurent de Gouvion Saint-Cyr, 1st Marquis of Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, is a French commander in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Saint-Cyr was a stoic in an age of pragmatism and glory. Yet, he believes that Napoleon deliberately refused for him to be his right hand man just to. In the opening of the Russian campaign, Saint-Cyr receives command of the VI Corps. His goal is to become a Marshal and a Marquis, while also proving to Napoleon that he is not any ordinary general. It has been heard in very faint rumors, however, that in the back of mind, he wishes to overthrow Napoleon for revenge...

Prominent Figures

France

XXIV. Emmanuel de Grouchy

Emmanuel de Grouchy, 2nd Marquis of Grouchy, is a French general and Marshal of the Empire. He is made commander of the III Cavalry Corps. His purpose is to be a “plan B”, essentially being a support in case the French army faces any troubles in the invasion.

XXV. Louis-Pierre Montbrun

Louis Pierre, Count Montbrun, is a French cavalry general, who served with great distinction in the cavalry arm throughout the wars of the Revolution and the Consulate, and in 1800 was appointed to command his regiment, having served therein from trooper upwards. He leads the II Cavalry Corps, a heavy group of horsemen. He faces no fear when it comes to battle, and will not hesitate to give his life for France. Many think of him as a “nutcase”, as he will casually compliment enemies in the midst of war.

However, one of his wits is copying enemy strategies, a skill that will prove useful in the invasion.



Further Research

1. <https://www.history.com/news/napoleons-disastrous-invasion-of-russia>
2. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/thisday/jun24/napoleon-invades-russia/>
3. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/French_invasion_of_Russia
4. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/invasion-of-russia/>
5. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Napoleonic-Wars/France-and-northern-Europe-1809-12>